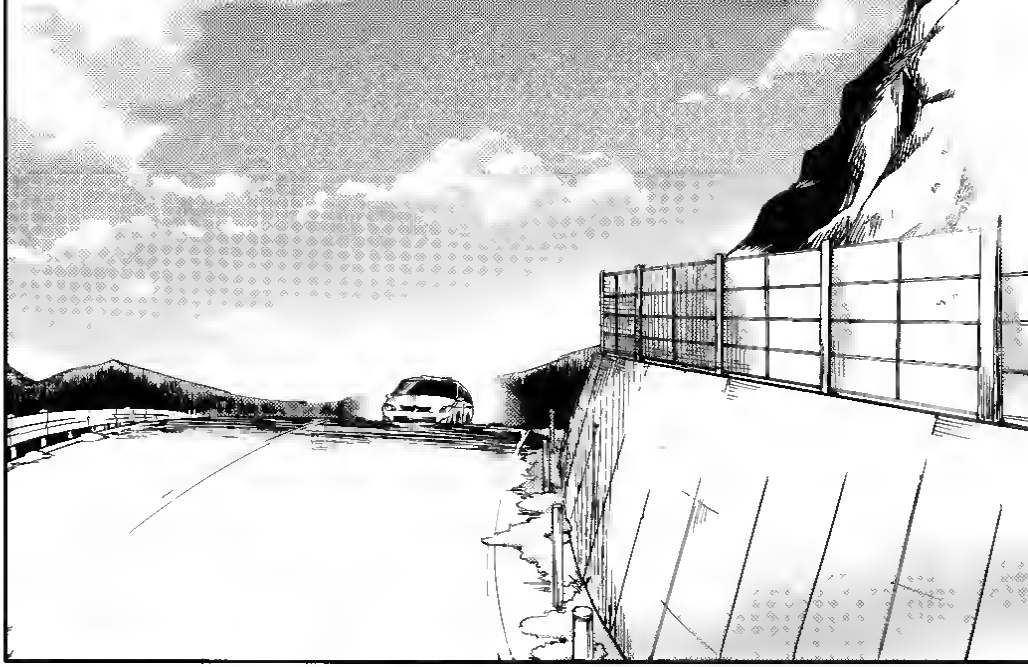

canis minor



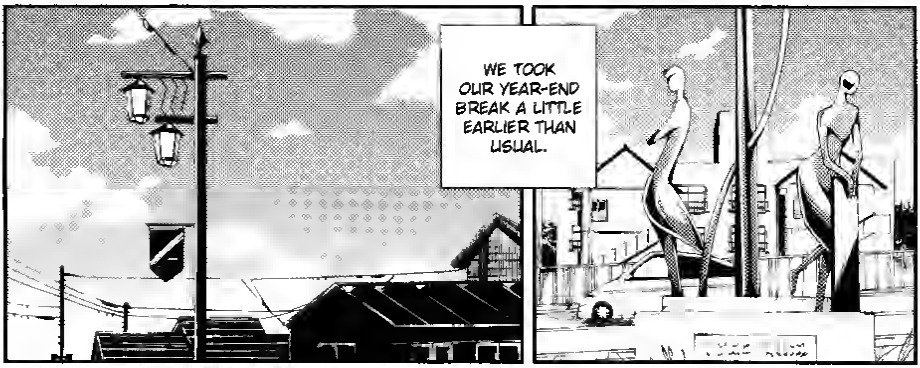

YEAH!
IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE ALMOST THERE, PRODUCER!


YEP.
I HOPE IT'S A NICE PLACE.


I CAN'T WAIT TO VISIT THESE HOT SPRINGS!

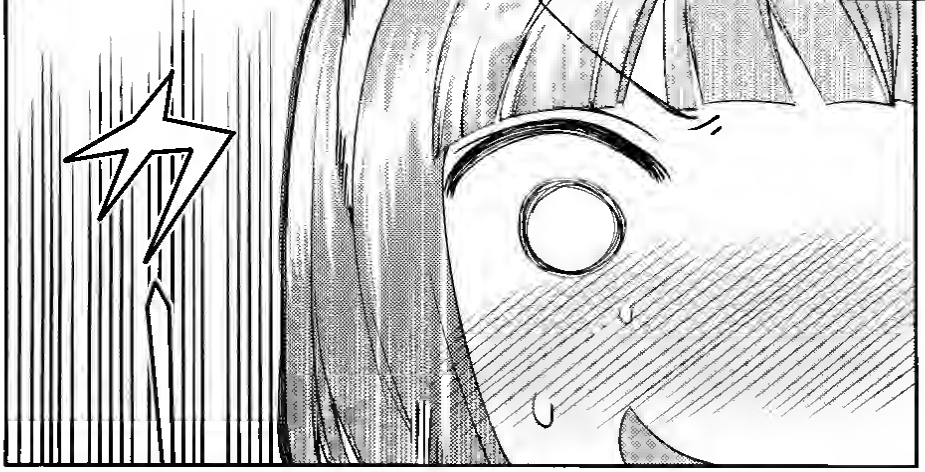

IT'S THE BEST ONE I KNOW, AFTER ALL.
THERE'S NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THAT.
え！…

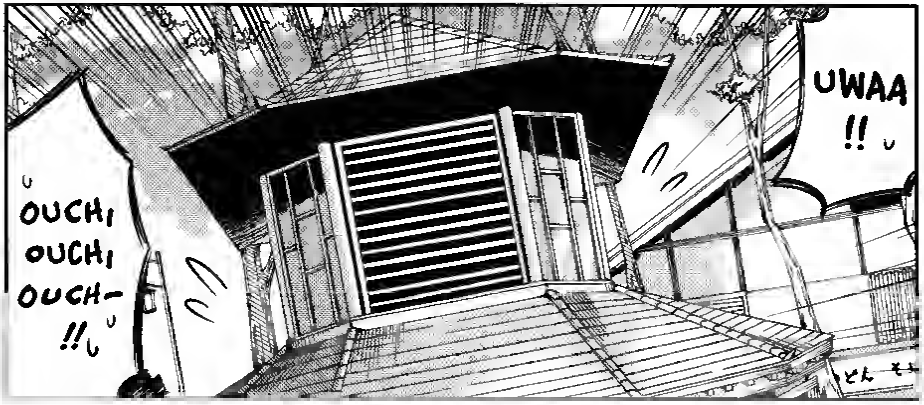

ONE DAY IN DECEMBER.


WE TOOK OUR YEAR-END BREAK A LITTLE EARLIER THAN USUAL.


WE DECIDED TO VISIT A CERTAIN HOT SPRING FOR THIS LITTLE VACATION OF OURS.


THE ONE WHO RECOMMENDED THAT HOT SPRING,
THIS FOOT BATH IS SAID TO BE GOOD FOR YOUR BODY.
ほう
WAS TAKAGAKI KAEDE, ONE OF THE IDOLS UNDER PRODUCER'S CHARGE.
YOU HAVE TO TAKE CARE, THOUGH. IT'S RATHER HOT.
ぼーっ
OTONA-SHI
!?
ヒョコ
YOU'VE BEEN SITTING THERE FOR A LONG TIME. ISN'T IT HOT?
HUH?
しゃ

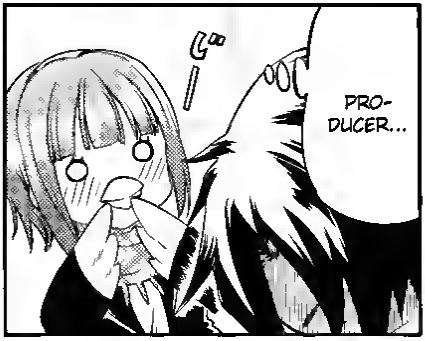



UWAA !!
OUCH! OUCH! OUCH— !!


ヒリ
ヒリ
ARE YOU OKAY?
KOTORI?
UUU... SORRY ABOUT THAT...



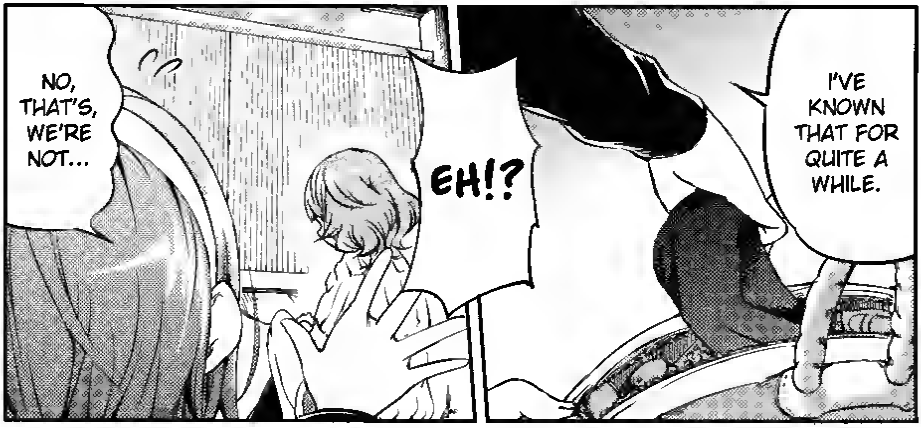

I'LL GET A WET TOWEL FOR YOU.


PRO-
DUCER...

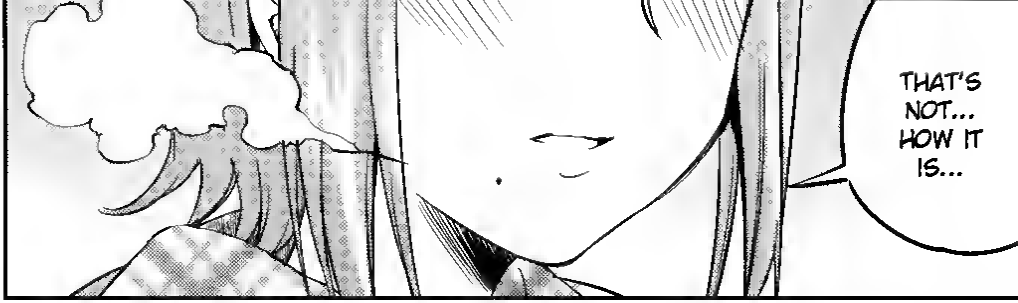

I WISH...
THIS WAS JUST A TRIP BETWEEN THE TWO OF US ..
YOU'LL WEAR YOURSELF OUT LIKE AN OLD PAIR OF TIGHTS IF YOU KEEP ON STARING SO HARD.

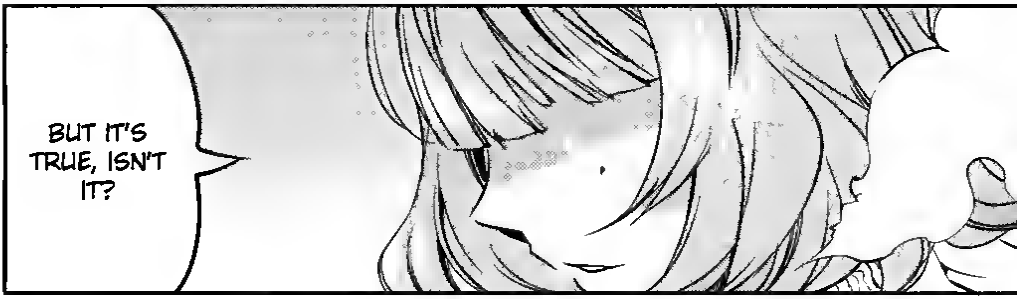

IT'S LIKE YOU'RE PIERCING HIM WITH THAT STARE OF YOURS.
WHA-
WHAT'S THIS, NOW?
I, I-I, I DON'T F, FEEL ANYTHING SPECIAL TOWARDS HIM...
OH, WAIT. THE ONE WANTING TO BE PIERCED IS OTONASHI, ISN'T IT?
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING!?


OTONASHI AND PRODUCER.
YOU'RE A COUPLE, AREN'T YOU?


NO, THAT'S, WE'RE NOT...
EH!?
I'VE KNOWN THAT FOR QUITE A WHILE.


EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE A PERFECT MATCH FOR EACH OTHER?





IT'S TRUE. ON THAT DAY, I ACCEPTED PRODUCER'S CONFESSION.



BUT NOW, WHEN I THINK ABOUT HIM,

I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S REALLY OKAY FOR ME TO RETURN THOSE FEELINGS.

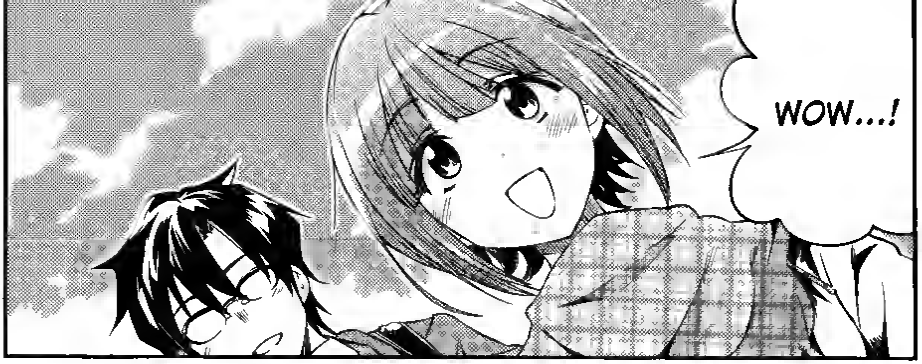


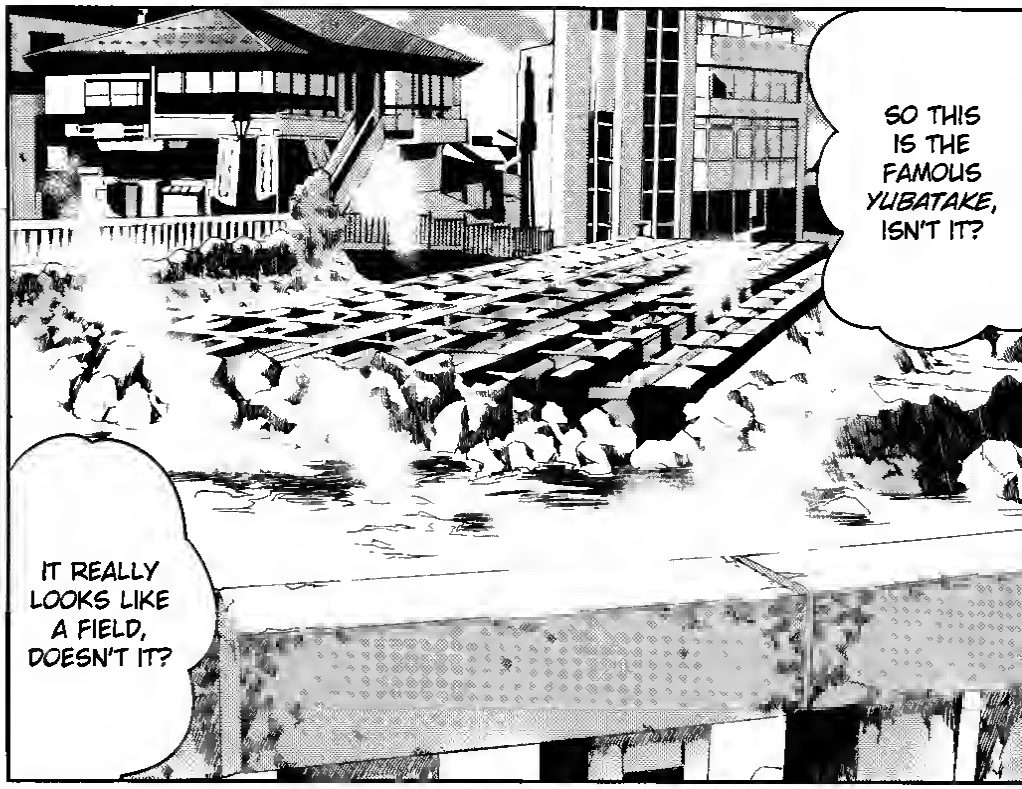


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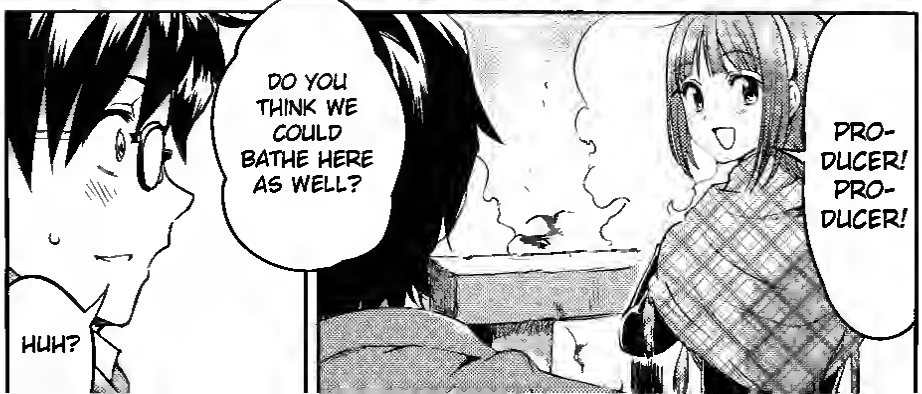
canis







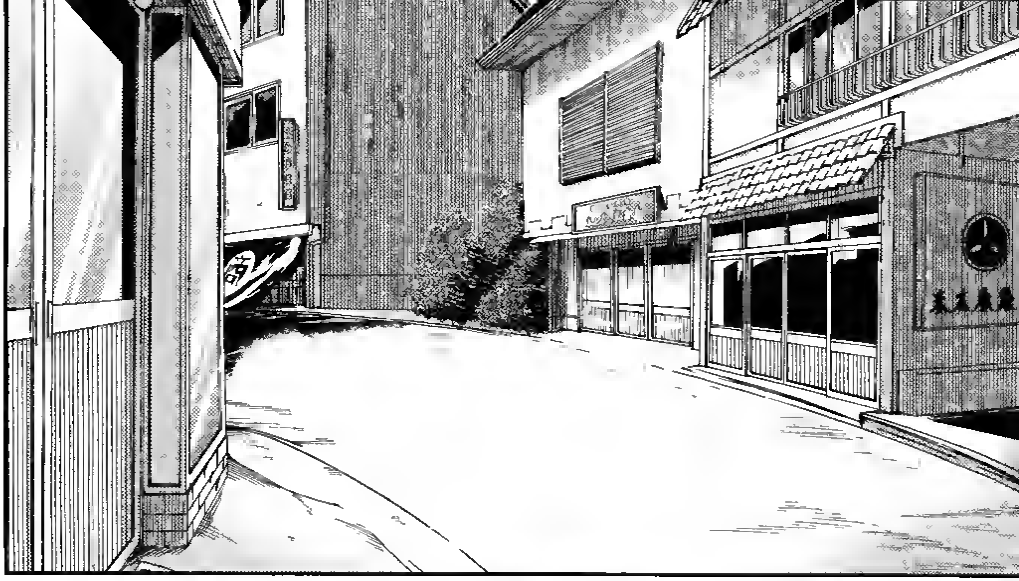
*YUBATAKE - LIT: HOT WATER FIELD. A HOT SPRING SOURCE IN KUSATSU



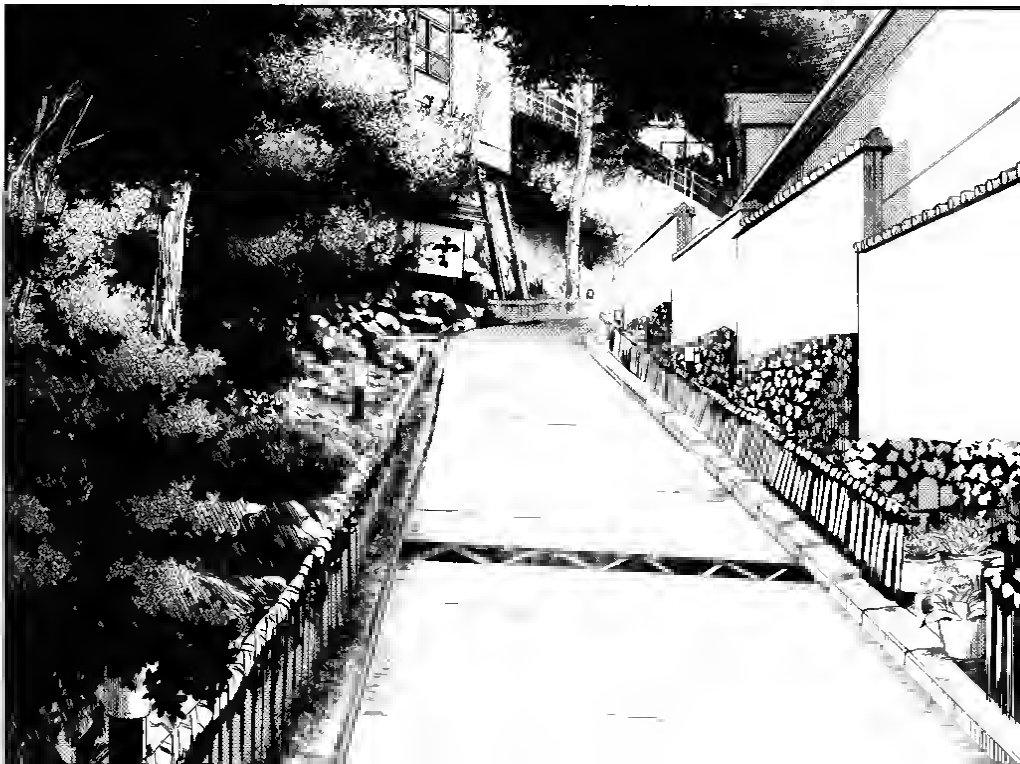

EH?
EH?
THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A JOKE, WASN'T IT?
EVEN THOUGH YOU SOUNDED SERIOUS ABOUT IT.

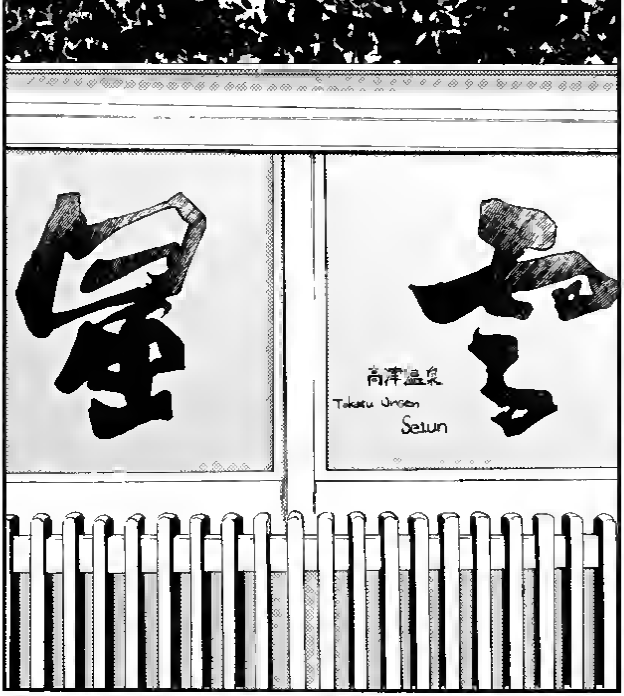

I'M NOT!
YOU'RE QUITE THE EXHIBITIONIST, AREN'T YOU, OTONASHI?
WELL, YOU'RE A FUN PERSON TO BE WITH, KOTORI

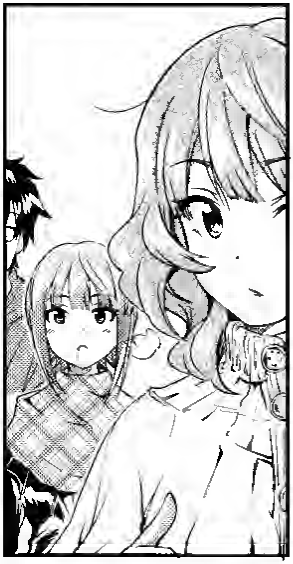

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LAUGH THAT MUCH...







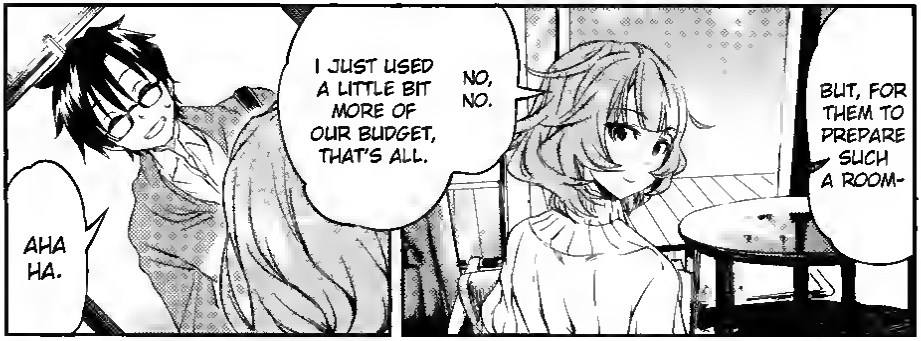

高津温泉
Takatu Jnsen
Setun






THIS IS THE GIRL'S (?) ROOM.
WE'LL BE HAVING OUR MEALS TOGETHER IN THIS ROOM AS WELL.


YOU'VE REALLY PICKED A NICE RYOKAN, KAEDE.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.


BUT, FOR THEM TO PREPARE SUCH A ROOM-
NO, NO.
I JUST USED A LITTLE BIT MORE OF OUR BUDGET, THAT'S ALL.
AHA HA.

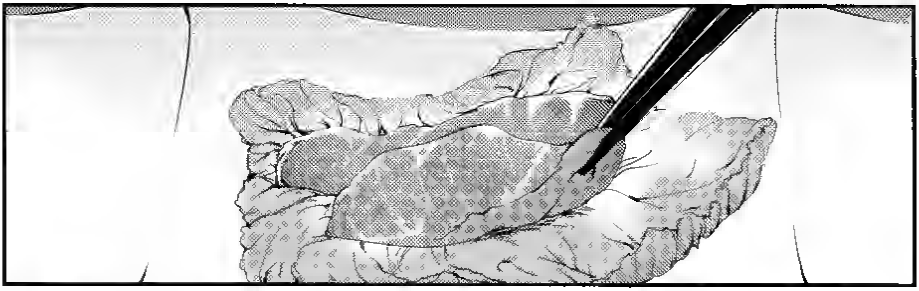

LOOK! DON'T YOU THINK THIS PLACE'S AMENETIES ARE REALLY GOOD?
WELL, UH. I UNDER-STAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, BUT...


EH!?
NO, THAT'S NOT IT!
ARE YOU ALREADY TAKING THE BEER OUT, KOTORI?

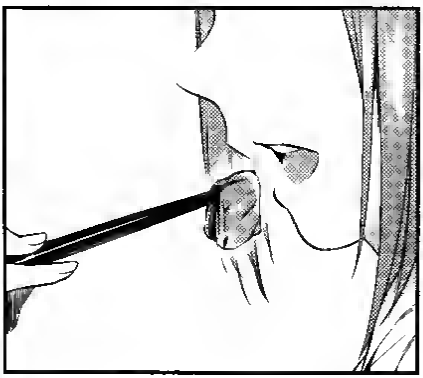

YOU JUST THOUGHT, "DAMN, SHE'S ACTING LIKE AN OLD LADY", DIDN'T YOU?
STOP FLIRTING ALREADY, YOU TWO. AREN'T WE HERE FOR THE HOT SPRINGS?
W... WHAT !?
SHE'S ALREADY IN FULL BATTLE REGA-LIA!?
?
IS SOME-THING WRONG?
QUACK
JUST LOOK AT WHAT YOU'RE WEARING!!!
ALSO, WHY DO YOU SEEM KIND OF SMUG ABOUT IT!?


WHEN DO YOU WISH FOR YOUR MEALS TO BE SERVED?
PARDON MY INTRU-SION.
P, P, pro, producer! you can't look!
WAIT! KAEDE, YOUR TOWEL! YOUR TOWEL IS-
I'D LIKE OUR DINNER TO BE SERVED NOW, THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!!
ZZZ...
IN ANY CASE, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'LL HAVE A FINE MEAL SOON ENOUGH.

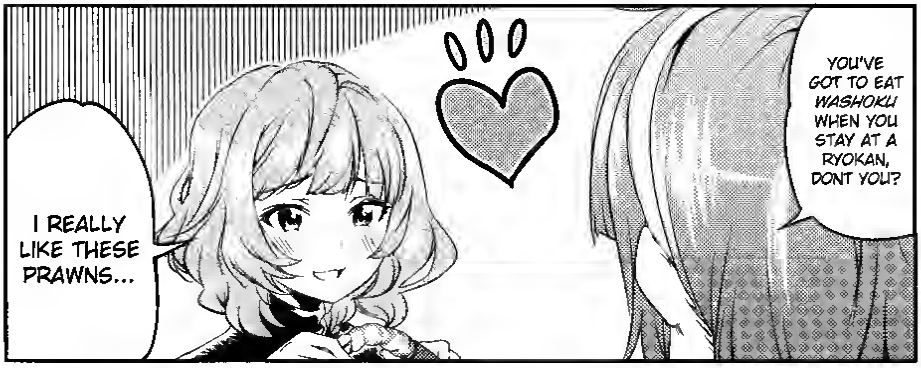




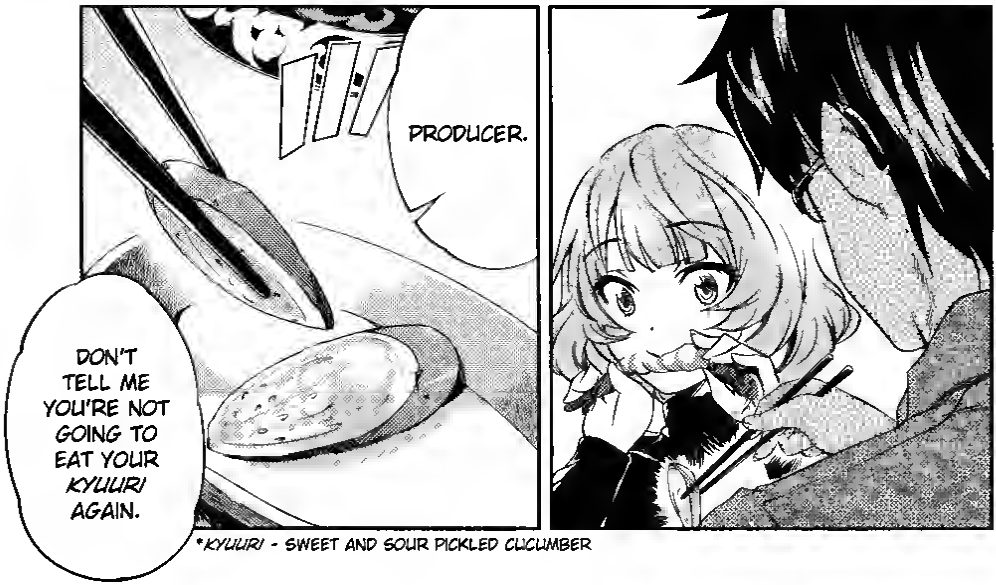




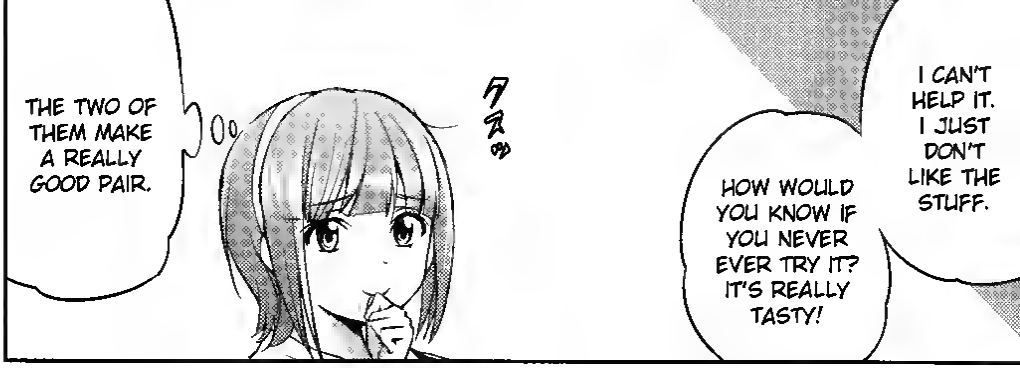


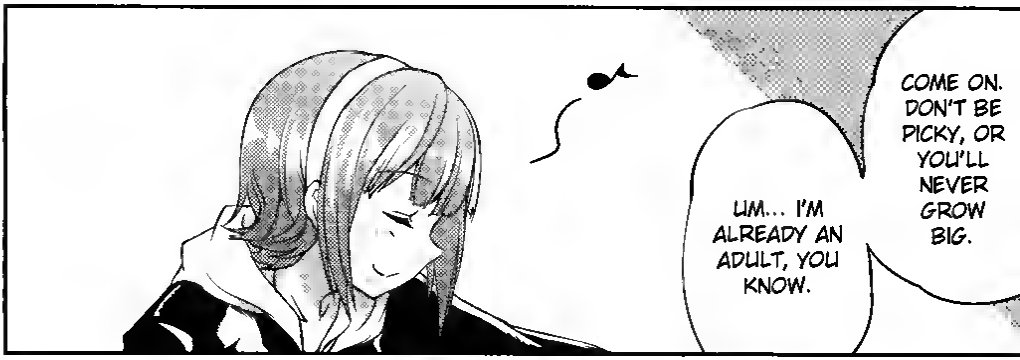


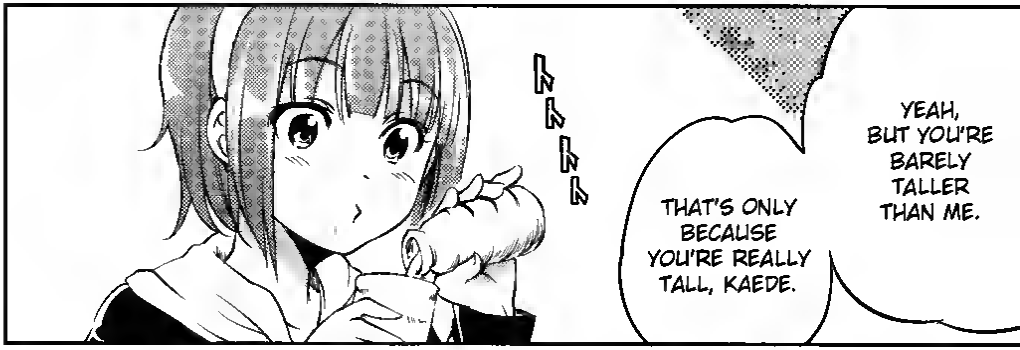
*WASHOKU - LIT: JAPANESE STYLE CUISINE.



*KYUURI - SWEET AND SOUR PICKLED CUCUMBER


I CAN'T HELP IT. I JUST DON'T LIKE THE STUFF.
HOW WOULD YOU KNOW IF YOU NEVER EVER TRY IT? IT'S REALLY TASTY!
クスッ
THE TWO OF THEM MAKE A REALLY GOOD PAIR.


COME ON. DON'T BE PICKY, OR YOU'LL NEVER GROW BIG.
UM... I'M ALREADY AN ADULT, YOU KNOW.

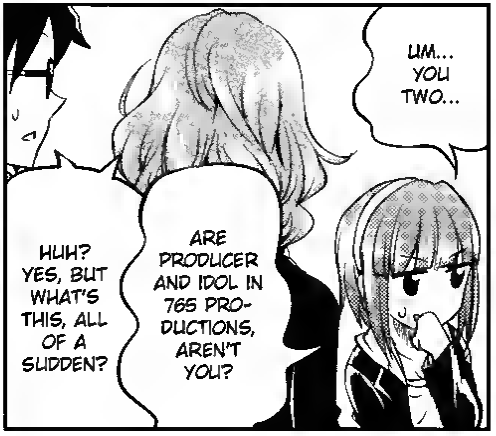

YEAH, BUT YOU'RE BARELY TALLER THAN ME.
THAT'S ONLY BECAUSE YOU'RE REALLY TALL, KAEDE.
トトトト


COME TO THINK OF IT, I WAS ALWAYS TALLER THAN YOU, BACK THEN... YOU'VE REALLY GROWN A LOT, PRODUCER.
QUIT ACTING SILLY ALREADY.
クピッ
...


I DON'T SUPPOSE YOUR SIRLOIN HAS GROWN BIGGER AS WELL, HAS IT?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT!?
YOU'VE NEVER SEEN IT, ANYWAY!


YES?
HOLD... HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!


IT'S JUST THAT... WHEN I HEAR YOU TWO TALK...
IT FEELS LIKE THE TWO OF YOU GO BACK A LONG WAY...


UM... YOU TWO...
ARE PRODUCER AND IDOL IN 765 PRO-DUCTIONS, AREN'T YOU?
HUH? YES, BUT WHAT'S THIS, ALL OF A SUDDEN?


HUH? OTONASHI, DIDN'T YOU KNOW?
AH, THAT'S-
IT'S BECAUSE,
PRODUCER AND I WERE CLASSMATES BACK IN JUNIOR HIGH.

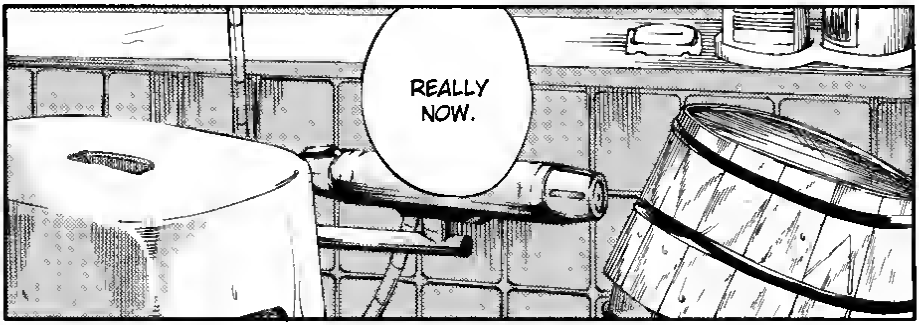



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WHAT'S WRONG? YOU KEEP GLANCING AT ME.
IT'S NOTHING. I WAS JUST THINKING THAT A FIGURE LIKE YOURS IS TOO GOOD FOR AN OFFICE WORKER.
NAH. I'M NOT GETTING ANY YOUNGER, YOU KNOW?
YOU'RE A LOT SLIMMER AND PRETTIER THAN I AM, KAEDE.


EVEN SO, PRODUCER ONLY HAS EYES FOR YOU, OTONASHI.




REALLY NOW.

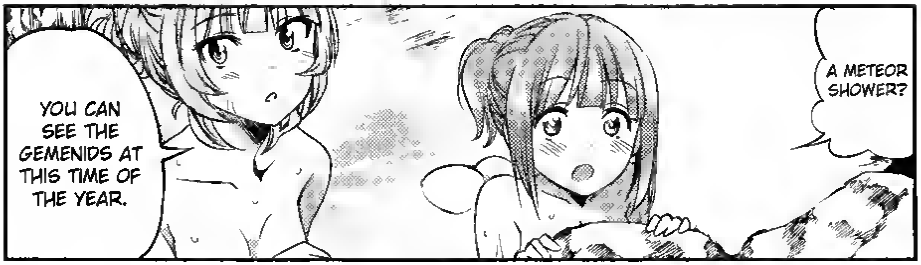

YOU'RE WORRIED, AREN'T YOU? ABOUT MY RELATION-SHIP WITH HIM.
ブブブ
EH? AH... YES, KIND OF...


I DID SAY WE WERE CLASS-MATES IN JUNIOR HIGH,
BUT, WE ONLY BECAME FRIENDS IN OUR FINAL YEAR. THE TWO OF US ONLY SAW EACH OTHER FOR A YEAR OR SO.
PRODUCER PROBABLY NEVER TOLD YOU, SO THAT YOU WOULDN'T WORRY TOO MUCH.
THEN AGAIN, THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU WANTED TO HEAR, RIGHT?
.....
IT'S JUST AS YOU MIGHT HAVE IMAGINED.


JUST SO THAT I COULD MEET UP WITH HIM AGAIN, I DID EVERYTHING I COULD TO COME TO 765 PRODUCTIONS AS AN IDOL.
THAT'S THE TRUTH.
IS THAT SO...
WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS...
THAT YOU, TAKAGAKI... ARE IN LOVE WITH HIM. IS THAT RIGHT?

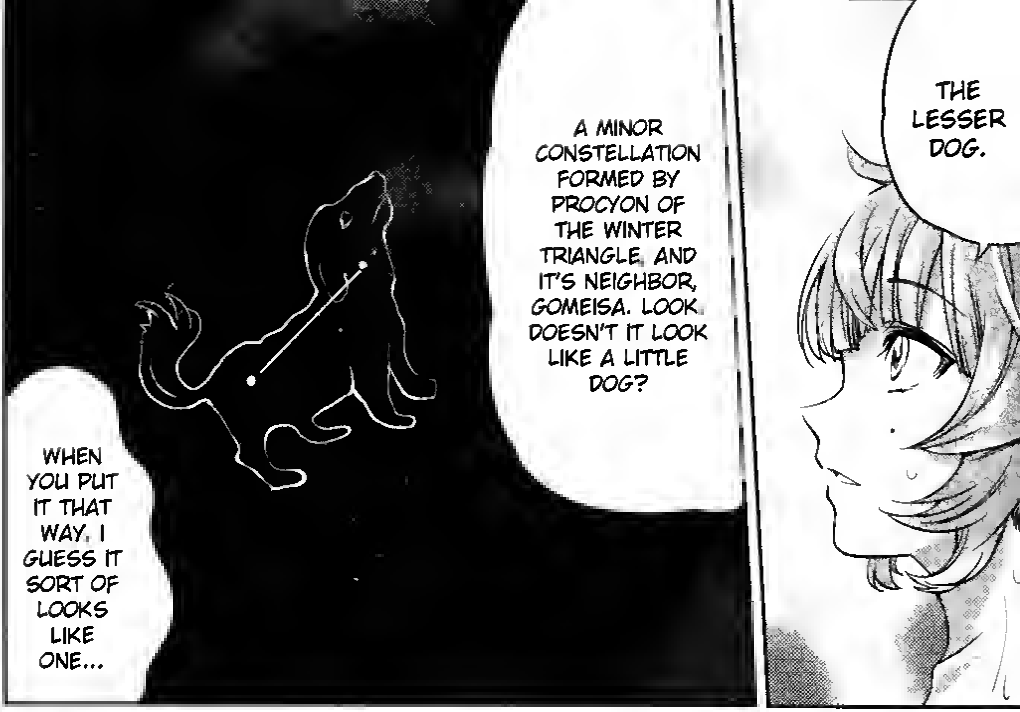

TA...
TAKA-GAKI...?
ジャバ ジャバ
LOOKS LIKE I WAS RIGHT!


IT'S A METEOR SHOWER!

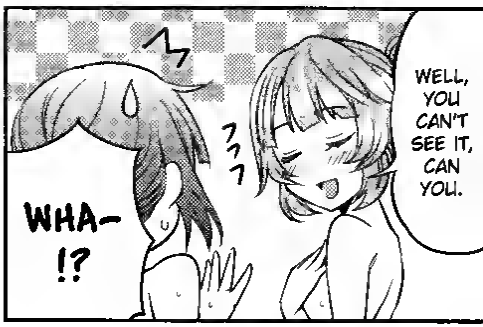

A METEOR SHOWER?
YOU CAN SEE THE GEMENIDS AT THIS TIME OF THE YEAR.


CANIS MINOR.
HUH?


THE REAL THING'S PRETTY AMAZING


THE LESSER DOG.
A MINOR CONSTELLATION FORMED BY PROCYON OF THE WINTER TRIANGLE, AND IT'S NEIGHBOR, GOMEISA. LOOK, DOESN'T IT LOOK LIKE A LITTLE DOG?
WHEN YOU PUT IT THAT WAY, I GUESS IT SORT OF LOOKS LIKE ONE...


THERE IS A GREEK MYTH ABOUT THE CONSTELLA-TION OF CANIS MINOR-


WELL, YOU CAN'T SEE IT, CAN YOU.
WHA-!?


WHY ARE YOU BRINGING THIS UP, ALL OF A SUDDEN?


THE FAMED HUNTER ACTAEON AND HIS PRIZED HOUND MELAMPUS
WOULD ALWAYS PROWL THE WILDERNESS LOOKING FOR GAME
ONE FATEFUL DAY, ACTAEON WAS HUNTING DEER AS HE ALWAYS DID, WITH MELAMPUS AT HIS SIDE.
WELL, DAMN.
HE WAS SEPERATED FROM HIS FAITHFUL DOG AND WAS WANDERING ALONE IN THE FOREST.
AS NIGHT FELL, HE SAW A SHINING LIGHT IN THE WOODS BEFORE HIM
I SUPPOSE IT'S SOMEONE'S HOUSE.
HOWEVER, THAT LIGHT WAS NOT WHAT HE EXPECTED IT TO BE


IT WAS THE BATHING FIGURE OF THE GODDESS OF THE HUNT, ARTEMIS.
AH.
WHA-
B, BEAUTI-FUL!

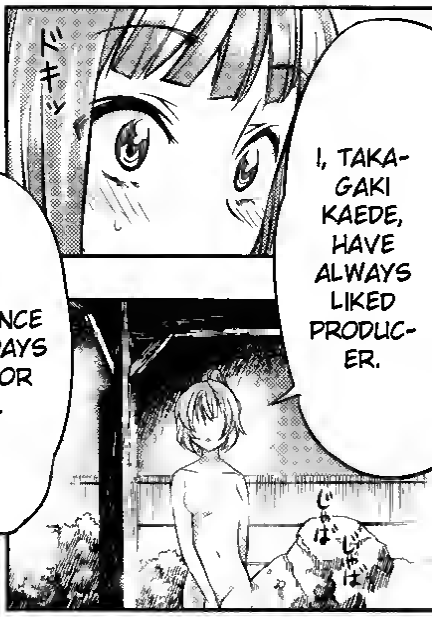

YE-
EA-
ARGH
!?
IN HER RAGE AT HAVING A MERE MORTAL LOOK UPON HER NAKED FORM,
ARTEMIS CURSED ACTAEON, TURNING HIM INTO A STAG.
!?
!?
ACTAEON, IN HIS CHANGED FORM, WAS CHANCED UPON BY HIS HOUND, MELAMPUS.
IN A CRUEL TWIST OF FATE,
UNABLE TO DO ANYTHING, ACTAEON WAS TORN APART BY HIS OWN HUNTING DOG.
アーッ!


UM... WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME THIS?

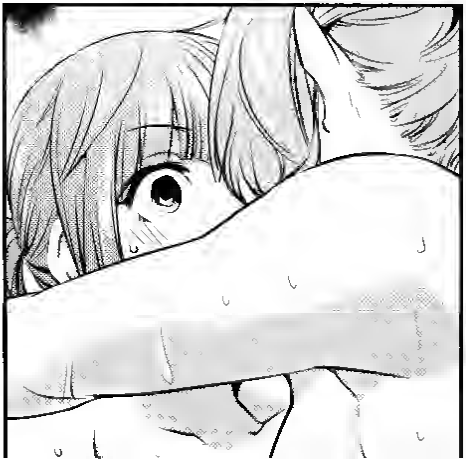

I'LL ANSWER YOUR QUESTION FROM BEFORE.


SO, IF YOU THINK THAT THINGS BETWEEN YOU AND HIM WILL STAY LIKE THIS FOREVER,


ガラッ
EVER SINCE THOSE DAYS IN JUNIOR HIGH.


ドキッ
I, TAKAGAKI KAEDE, HAVE ALWAYS LIKED PRODUCER.
じゃば じゃば


I'LL GLADLY
EAT HIM UP,
BONES AND
ALL.

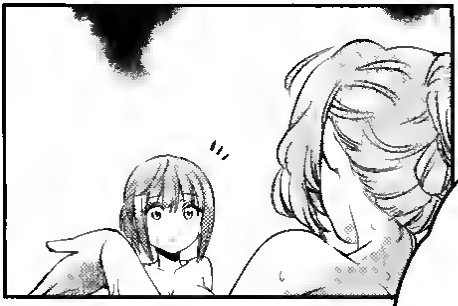





THAT'S...
I DON'T WANT THAT TO HAPPEN... I REALLY DON'T...


YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT.


WHY...?
I'VE SAID IT BEFORE, HAVEN'T I?



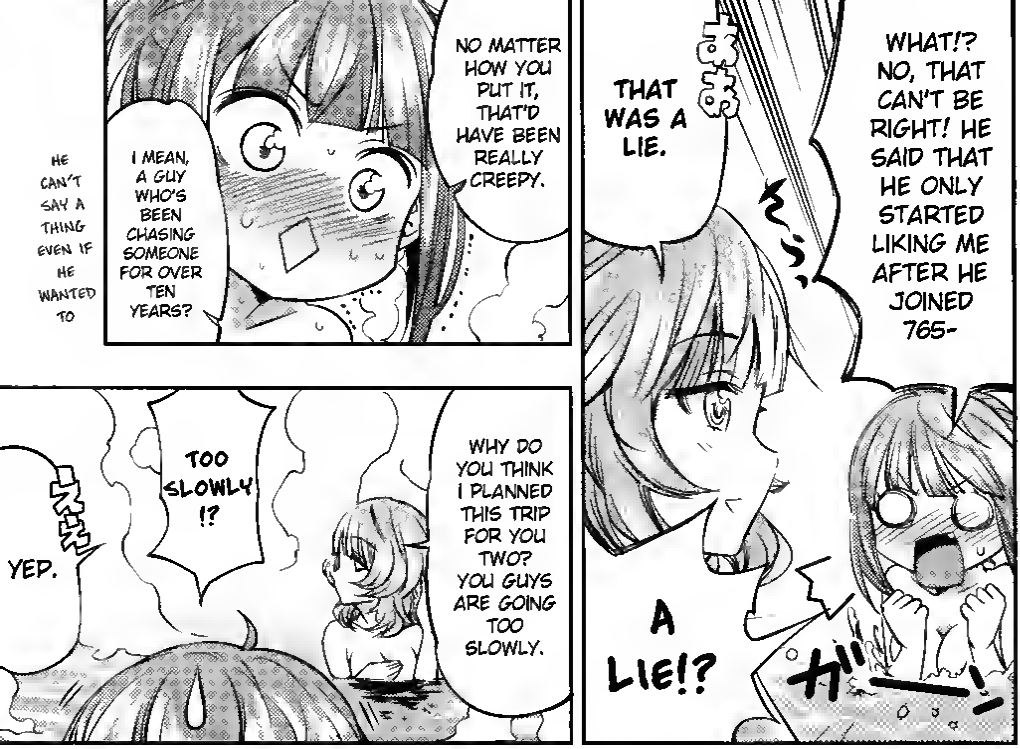

THERE'S NO WAY I COULD EVER HAVE WON, ANYWAY.


PRODUCER AND OTONASHI.
YOU TWO FIT EACH OTHER SO PERFECTLY, IT'S ALMOST DETESTA-BLE.
I ALREADY KNEW THAT HE CONFESSED TO YOU A WHILE BACK. HE'S VERY EASY TO READ.
FROM THE LOOKS OF IT, HE NEVER THOUGHT ANYTHING OF ME AFTER THAT YEAR IN JUNIOR HIGH.
BUT... ARE YOU REALLY OKAY WITH LETTING GO SO EASILY?
TEN YEARS IS A LONG TIME, AFTER ALL...
I DON'T NEED THOSE KIND WORDS FROM YOU.
I ALREADY KNOW I CAN'T WIN, ANYWAY.
HUH?
BECAUSE, YOU SEE...


EVEN BEFORE I MET HIM, HE'S ALWAYS BEEN IN LOVE WITH 'OTONASHI KOTORI'.


ぶわっ



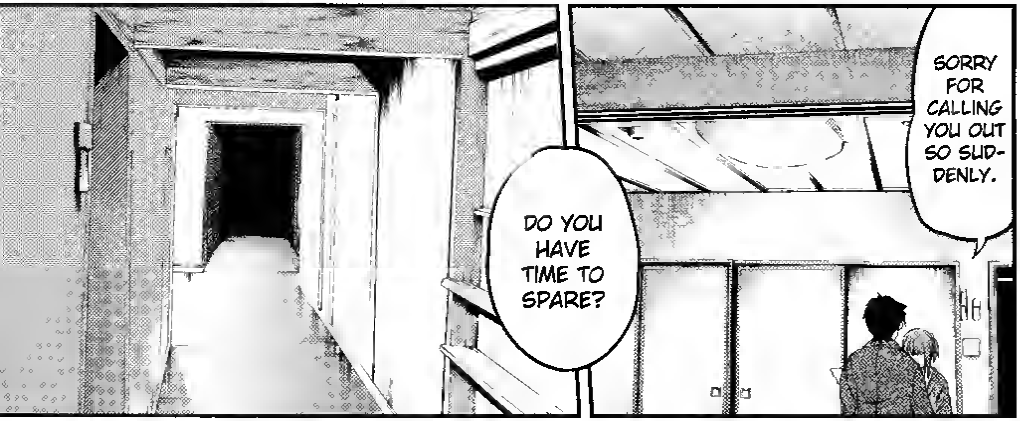

WHAT!? NO, THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT! HE SAID THAT HE ONLY STARTED LIKING ME AFTER HE JOINED 765-
THAT WAS A LIE.
A LIE!?
NO MATTER HOW YOU PUT IT, THAT'D HAVE BEEN REALLY CREEPY.
I MEAN, A GUY WHO'S BEEN CHASING SOMEONE FOR OVER TEN YEARS?
HE CAN'T SAY A THING EVEN IF HE WANTED TO
WHY DO YOU THINK I PLANNED THIS TRIP FOR YOU TWO? YOU GUYS ARE GOING TOO SLOWLY.
TOO SLOWLY!?
YEP.


YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T WANT ME TO TAKE HIM AWAY FROM YOU, AM I RIGHT?
WITH THAT, YOU SHOULD UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT HIM.
YOU LOVE HIM AS WELL, DON'T YOU?


I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING THROUGH YOUR MIND, OTONASHI,
BUT HE'S WAITING FOR YOUR REPLY.


FOR BOTH HIS SAKE AND MINE,
YOU SHOULD GIVE HIM AN ANSWER AS FAST AS YOU CAN.
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KOTORI?


DO YOU HAVE TIME TO SPARE?
SORRY FOR CALLING YOU OUT SO SUDDENLY.


I HEARD FROM TAKAGAKI...
I

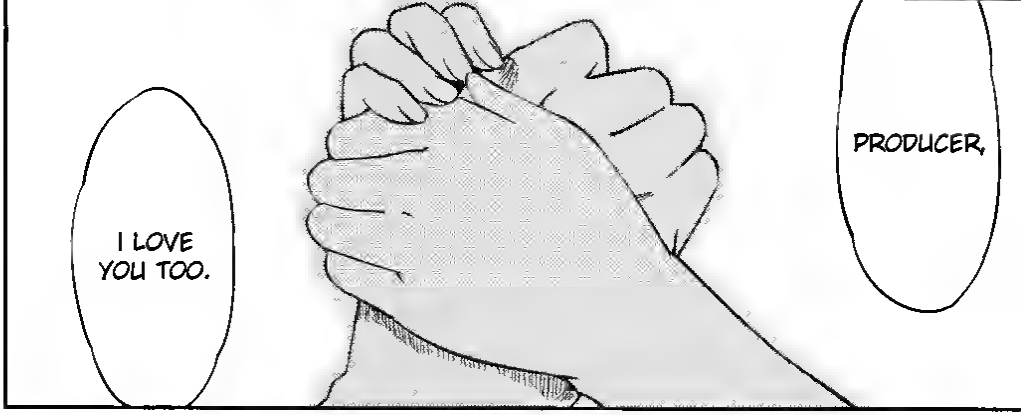

!
PRO-DUCER.
YOU'VE LIKED ME SINCE MY IDOL DAYS, HAVEN'T YOU.


I GUESS IT SOUNDS REALLY CREEPY, DOESN'T IT.


HEHE.
KAEDE TOLD YOU ALL ABOUT THAT?


I GOT PRETTY EMBARRASSED WHEN I FIRST HEARD THAT. BUT, YOU KNOW, I'M ACTUALLY PRETTY HAPPY ABOUT IT, AT THE SAME TIME!
YOU'VE GOT THAT PART WRONG.


THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
AND... I'M SORRY FOR KEEPING YOU WAITING SO LONG.


PRODUCER,
I LOVE YOU TOO.

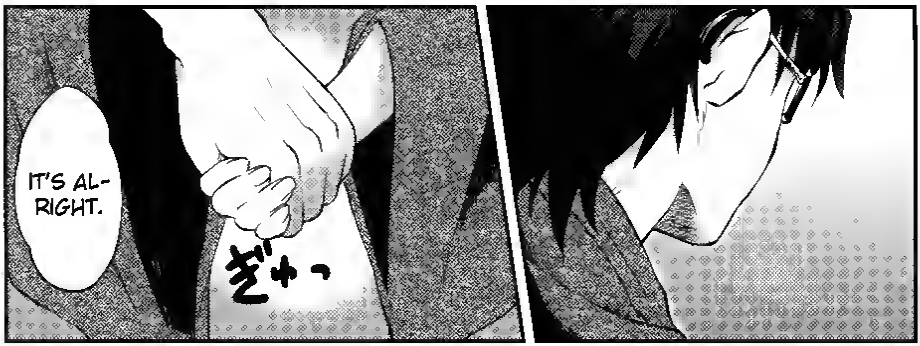

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WOULD YOU PLEASE-
I'M SORRY!


KOTORI,
ギュッ


EH?
AH, NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT! PRODUCER, THERE'S SOMETHING I WANTED TO TELL YOU-!


IS IT ABOUT WHY YOUR ANSWER WAS SO LATE?
YES...


IT'S AL-RIGHT.
ぎゅっ


I'LL ACCEPT ANYTHING YOU HAVE TO SAY.


JUST AS TAKAGAKI SAID,
IF IT'S HIM, IT SHOULD BE OKAY...


LUM... I...
I'M STILL... A MAIDEN... SO, IF YOU'RE OKAY WITH THAT.....?



WHAT?




UH, YEAH.
THAT'S THE REASON WHY YOU COULDN'T GIVE HIM A REPLY?
THIS IS BOTHER-SOME ENOUGH, HONESTLY.
WHAT IF IT BOTHERS HIM ON OUR F, FIRST TIME!?
WHAT IF HE THINKS I'M TOO CONSERV-ATIVE!?
B, BUT, BUT IT'S REALLY IMPOR-TANT, ISN'T IT!?
SO. YESTERDAY, INSTEAD OF BEING WORRIED ABOUT ME, YOU WERE WORRIED ABOUT THAT INSTEAD.
IF THAT'S REALLY THE CASE, MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE GONE FOR THE KILL INSTEAD.
NO, YOU CAN'T DO THAT!!
OTHERWISE, HOW WOULD YOU EVER HAVE REPLIED LAST NIGHT?
I'M SORRY!


AND SO, HOW DID PRODUCER REACT TO YOUR LITTLE 'CONFESSION'?
CAN I TAKE A PASS ON THAT?
NOPE.
UM...
"IT'S OKAY! I'M JUST A CHERRY BOY, AFTER ALL!"
YOU TWO ARE SO ALIKE THAT IT HURTS.

AFTERWORD



THIS IS THE THIRD BOOK I'VE MADE ABOUT KOTORI SO FAR. IN THE INTRODUCTION-DEVELOPMENT-CLIMAX-CONCLUSION STRUCTURE OF STORYTELLING, THIS IS THE 'DEVELOPMENT'! THE NEXT ONE WILL DEFINITELY BE THE CONCLUSION!

「Canis Minor」

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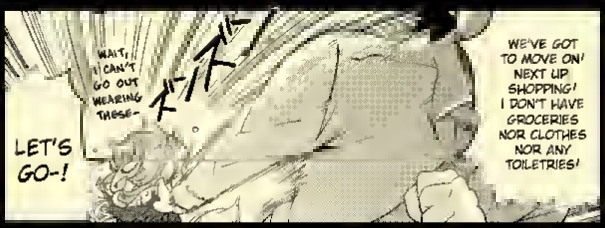
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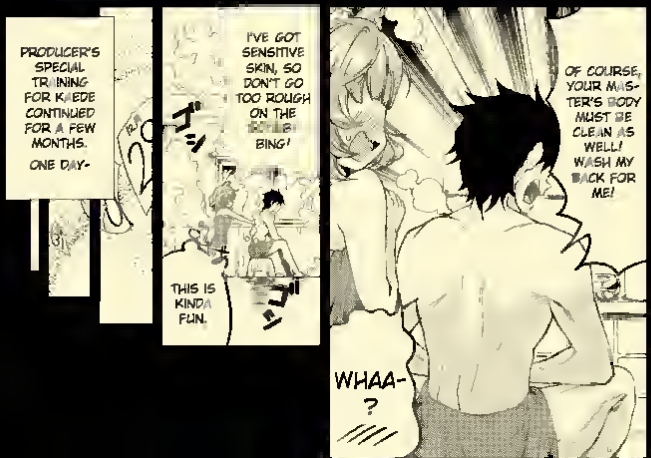
THIS OMAKE BOOKLET IS MEANT TO BE READ AFTER 'CANIS MINOR'.
BEWARE OF SPOILERS.


PRODUCER, WHAT'S WITH THIS COLLAR?
KAEDE. EVEN THOUGH YOU SAY YOU WANT TO BECOME TOP IDOL,
YOU KEEP DITCHING LESSONS, GET DRUNK ALL THE TIME, AND ALWAYS SMELL OF BEER SNACKS.
ARE YOU EVEN SERIOUS ABOUT BEING AN IDOL?
I'VE GOT THIS PAIR OF EARS, TOO.

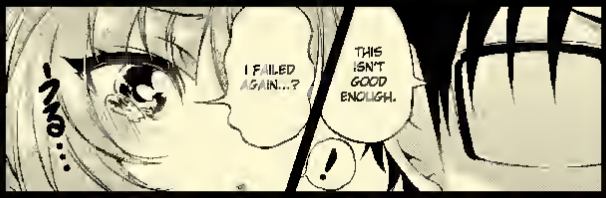

LISTEN TO WHAT I'M SAYING!
A NAUGHTY DOG LIKE YOU, KAEDE,
NEEDS TO BE DISCIPLINED!
PRODUCER... WHAT IS THIS?
THANKS TO YOU, I'M IN OVER MY HEAD WITH WORK!
I DON'T EVEN HAVE TIME TO DO MY LAUNDRY!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN IT'S MY FAULT!?
ISN'T IT BECAUSE YOU'RE SLOPPY BY NATURE...?


わしゃ
EEEK!
SO SHUT THAT MOUTH AND MOVE THOSE HANDS!
QUIT YOUR YAPPING AND START WORKING! THIS WILL KEEP ON GOING UNTIL YOU CORRECT YOUR BAD HABITS!
わしゃ


LET'S GO-!
WAIT, I CAN'T GO OUT WEARING THESE-
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WE'VE GOT TO MOVE ON! NEXT UP SHOPPING! I DON'T HAVE GROCERIES NOR CLOTHES NOR ANY TOILETRIES!

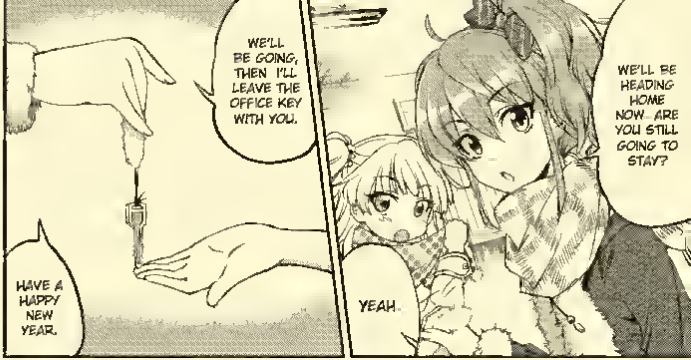

PRODUCER'S SPECIAL TRAINING FOR KAEDE CONTINUED FOR A FEW MONTHS.
ONE DAY-
I'VE GOT SENSITIVE SKIN, SO DON'T GO TOO ROUGH ON THE BODY BRUSHING!
ゴシ
THIS IS KINDA FUN.
OF COURSE, YOUR MASTER'S BODY MUST BE CLEAN AS WELL! WASH MY BACK FOR ME!
WHAA-?

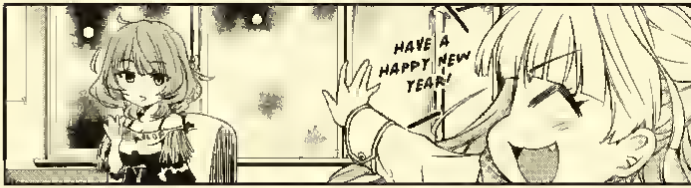

HM...
ズズズ…
MASTER, HERE'S YOUR MISO SOUP.
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うる…
I FAILED AGAIN...?
THIS ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH.
!

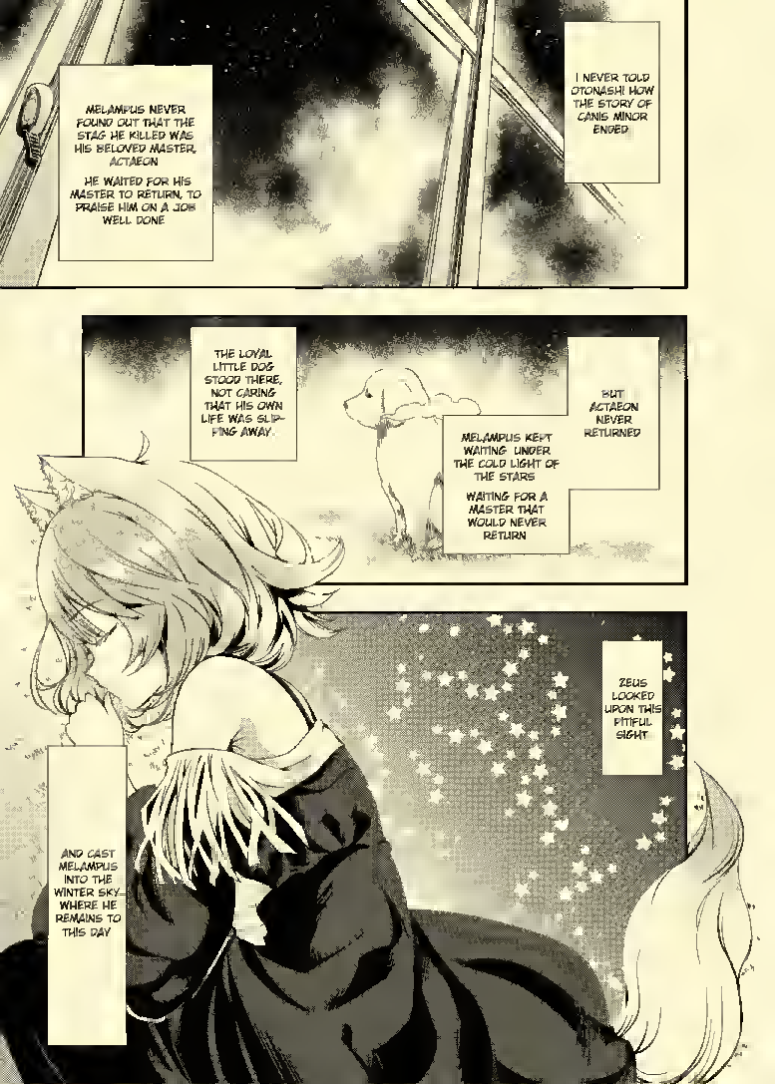

ぐぬぬ…
THAT'S RIGHT KAEDE. YOU USELESS FELLOW.
PRODUCER! PLEASE, PUNISH THIS USELESS SELF OF MINE...!
WHY IS IT THAT MY MISO SOUP ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH? EVERYTHING ELSE WAS OKAY, SO...!


YOU WON'T HAVE TO MAKE ANY MORE MISO SOUP FROM NOW ON
AND WITH THAT, THE MASTER AND HIS FAITHFUL DOG WERE FRIENDS FOREVER-MORE.
KAEDE?
KAEDE-?


WE'LL BE GOING, THEN I'LL LEAVE THE OFFICE KEY WITH YOU.
HAVE A HAPPY NEW YEAR.
WE'LL BE HEADING HOME NOW. ARE YOU STILL GOING TO STAY?
YEAH.


HAVE A HAPPY NEW YEAR!


OH YEAH,
UM.
CHEER UP, OKAY?
パタン…


I NEVER TOLD OTONASHI HOW THE STORY OF CANIS MINOR ENDED.
MELAMPUS NEVER FOUND OUT THAT THE STAG HE KILLED WAS HIS BELOVED MASTER, ACTAEON
HE WAITED FOR HIS MASTER TO RETURN, TO PRAISE HIM ON A JOB WELL DONE
THE LOYAL LITTLE DOG STOOD THERE, NOT CARING THAT HIS OWN LIFE WAS SLIPPING AWAY.
BUT ACTAEON NEVER RETURNED
MELAMPUS KEPT WAITING UNDER THE COLD LIGHT OF THE STARS
WAITING FOR A MASTER THAT WOULD NEVER RETURN
ZEUS LOOKED UPON THIS PITIFUL SIGHT
AND CAST MELAMPUS INTO THE WINTER SKY... WHERE HE REMAINS TO THIS DAY


CANIS MINOR IS COMPRISED OF TWO STARS, PROCYON AND GOMEISA.
THEIR NAMES MEAN "BEFORE THE DOG" AND "THE BLEARY-EYED" RESPECTIVELY




EVEN NOW, MELAMPUS IS CRYING FOR HIS LOST MASTER.